

efforts of those who will be taking the streets that day. Hopefully you'll be with us. The world has changed immensely since 1919, but anarchists and radicals still face demonization and repression, especially now that capitalism is in an irreversible death-spiral. Remember this history and remember to believe only what you see and hear yourself. There will undoubtedly be counter-information spun against us after May 1st and it is up to you to answer the age old question:

Which side are you on?

(Text from Tides of Flame #18, Mar 2012, p.4)



historicalseditons.noblogs.org
February 2023

THE CENTRALIA IWW

Anarchist history is buried and forgotten, in part by the efforts of our enemies, in part by the amnesia of the public. One such forgotten history takes place 80 miles south of Seattle in the city of Centralia.

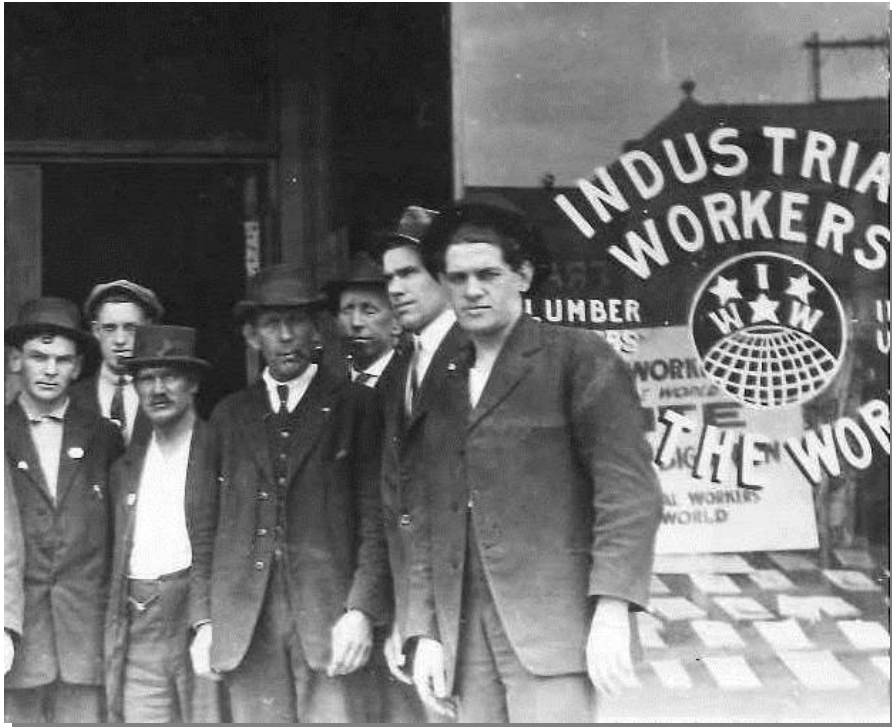
One day in 1914, with the world about to be consumed by war, a group of fifty homeless and jobless vagabonds entered Centralia. All of them were members of the Industrial Workers of the

World (IWW), a union of men and women of all races who wished band together to destroy the capitalist system. In Washington, the IWW were known as rambler and agitators, moving from town to town, stirring up trouble by challenging the

rampant exploitation of workers at the hands of the fledgling capitalists of the Pacific Northwest.

And so, when the IWW came to town, a group of newly deputized vigilantes escorted the troupe out of the city limits. Eight men soon returned and told the authorities that the band of people would return. Not only did they return, they began helping themselves to food from the local general store. After this incident, the vigilantes marched them all the way to Chehalis, the neighboring town. Once there, the local police kicked them out as well, leaving the hungry band to wander the roads once again.

Over the next years, it became clear that the US would enter the European war. The patriotic hysteria that possessed the population of Washington did nothing but fuel hatred against



the shootout the Centralia Deputy Sheriff was killed. It has been often said that the ghost of Wesley Everest killed this rabid swine.

Unfortunately, the repression that followed this incident crippled the IWW. All of the unionists in the logging camps were arrested and eventually Washington State made it illegal to belong to the union. Many believed the entire sequence of events was a conspiracy of the logger barons and other high capitalists. The trial for the IWW men was eventually moved to Montesano on Gray's Harbor and by the end of it eight men were sentenced to imprisonment for 2nd degree murder. It would only be years later that the men were released and there was a public acknowledgment of a great injustice. However, by the time the last of the Centralia IWW were released from prison, the year was 1939 and the war of labor against capitalism had been lost to repression, corruption, and fear.

In 1999, on the eve of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle, a mural honoring Wesley Everest and the IWW was painted on the side of the Elks building in Centralia. This is the only monument in the city honoring the memory of the loggers and vagabonds who had fought against exploitation and misery.

And so, on the eve of the International General Strike on May 1st, let us all fully support the



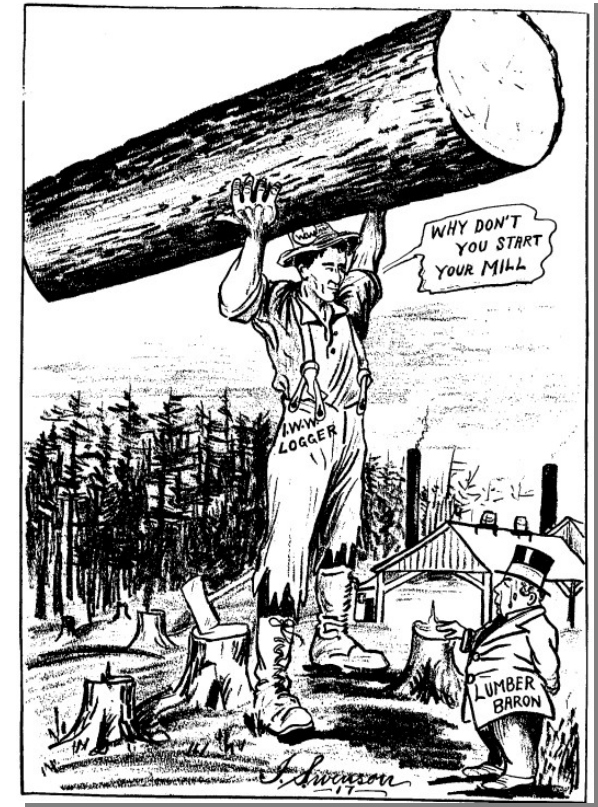
instructed the remaining IWW to build a coffin and bury their comrade. The local judge never prosecuted anyone for the murder.



After the bloodbath, a story went around that the IWW had ruthlessly murdered innocent, patriotic Americans. In their rage, two groups of vigilantes went out looking for the escaped IWW members and eventually came to a lone cabin in the woods. Being the imbeciles that they were, the two groups confused each other for their prey and in



the IWW, a known anti-war group. In 1917, the IWW was in the midst of organizing loggers against the timber barons and decided to set up a union hall in Centralia. Given its proximity to the logging areas, the city was in an ideal location. Beyond this, most IWW members were homeless and the union hall



was a good place for people to meet each other. The first landlord quickly evicted his tenants once he discovered they were the IWW, but the second landlord they found allowed them to operate openly. This angered the reactionary and anti-communist population of the town to such a degree that they soon took action.

In 1918, there was a parade to support the Red Cross and the US war effort. In the middle of the parade, a group of vigilantes (some of whom were paid by the lumber barons) stormed the union hall, kicked out the IWW members, and destroyed the building. The IWW were

made to walk through a gauntlet where they were beaten by business men and patriots before being led out of town just as they had been in 1914. A few months later, a blind newsstand owner who sold IWW and radical literature was forced into a car, driven out of the county, and told never to return. He quickly returned and resumed his business, only to be arrested on unspecified charges.

All of the animosity towards the IWW came to head after the IWW opened a new hall in 1919. Inspired by the spirit of the Seattle General Strike that February, they promised the public they would never be evicted again. A local lawyer assured them it was legal to defend themselves if they were attacked and based on this assurance the IWW armed itself with guns.

On November 11th, 1919, during the Armistice Day celebration, a group of American Legionnaires left the patriotic march and attempted to storm the union hall. Once they had smashed open the

doors they were fired on by the IWW members. Four Legionnaires were ultimately killed in this confrontation. All but one of the IWW members were captured and the union hall was destroyed,

its contents burned in the street by a psychotic right-wing mob. The IWW were taken to the city jail and later that night all of the lights in Centralia went out. In the darkness, a group of vigilantes stormed the jail, pulled a union member named Wesley Everest out of his cell and drove him to a nearby bridge where he was tortured, lynched, shot repeatedly, and left hanging until the next day. The police eventually brought the mangled body to the jail and

